

Beyond HRM's Performance Management: Towards Strategic Workforce Resilience

John Mendy

Abstract

HRM professionals' reliance on using teamwork, organisational planning and managerially- controlled appraisal measures within the framework of High Performance Organisation (HPO) and High Performance Work Systems (HPWS) has outlived its useful applicability and sustainability in today's SME crisis-ridden environment. This chapter highlights the gap between the HRM discipline, whose measures to resolve the organisational performance problem have instead resulted in a deepening of the performance crisis in resource-constrained SMEs and an urgent need to address such a fundamental problem through the creation, development and sustenance of more innovative measures. A critique of HPO and HPWS's structural and systemic approach to solve the effective organisational performance implementation gap led to an additional discovery, which is how to solve the performance problem competently and sustainably such that SMEs have a more strategically viable future. The study's interpretivism paradigm backed up by a survey of 85 management and staff respondents in a longitudinal study spanning 7 years in the UK highlighted 6 important themes. These were combined to develop a new 'Strategic Workforce Resilience Management Model' as a way to solve the SME performance quagmire. This fills the performance implementation and strategic sustainability gaps and introduces resilience characteristics into the way HRM professionals should be managing the performance problem. The limitations, the implications and future research areas are discussed.

Keywords: HRM, performance, management, staff, resilience, model

1. Introduction

Managing organisational performance has been a problematic area for Human Resource Management (HRM) professionals. This is partly because the discipline has depended on traditional measurement methods as part of managerial control [1]. Although appraisals have been used to measure role or on-the job and financial performance [2] as well as overall employee satisfaction [3], the organisational performance problem appears to have fallen into a state of crisis [4]. This chapter defines organisational performance as the sum total of the tasks that managers and staff complete in order to help an organisation achieve its operational and/or strategic goals/objectives. Despite such significance, greater emphasis of performance management appears to have been focused on larger firms [5]. This neglect has been

partly due to environmental change to which organisations have to constantly adapt to [6]. The frequency of change has challenged managers' competence to implement effective performance management and, by extension, employment relations practices [7]. Therefore, performance management issues within the changing organisational context in which SMEs operate could not be timelier [8].

It is envisaged that addressing organisational performance will help to identify innovative ways via which HR professionals can more effectively deal with the problem ([9]; Miller et al. [10]). Emerging literature is suggesting that financial constraints be attributed to SMEs' organisational performance problem [11]. Other scholars such as [12]) have identified the way knowledge is created and managed as an additional constraint on performance whereas Castagna et al. [13] has specifically highlighted customer management as a major challenge to the way HR professionals manage performance. The emerging debates are therefore suggesting that management competence ought to be addressed if employees' commitment to improving organisational performance is to be enhanced [14] in dealing with overall organisational performance. It is also highlighted in the emerging literature that the traditional methods of measuring, monitoring and evaluating performance through performance indicators are shifting towards innovation capability [15] whereby resource [16] and risk management become critical [17, 18]. Other researchers are even proposing network relationship management [19] whereas other scholars have highlighted the importance of managing the emblematic organisational culture in order to improve performance capability [24]. Despite the plethora of suggestions and propositions, it is still not known whether these management practices will facilitate a more sustainable performance management that will not only minimise SMEs' performance problems but also increase their resilience in the longer term [21, 22]. Therefore, the question that this chapter seeks to address is 'can a model be developed for SMEs which will help its managers become more competent in addressing the organisational performance problem in a way that enhances their resilience?'

Immediately after the introduction, this chapter examines the foundation on which performance management is based by critiquing the role of management in High-Performance Work Systems and High-Performance Organisation models. An examination of the research methods is followed by the study's empirical findings, which are then used to develop a new 'Strategic Workforce Resilience Management Model'. This model is designed to help managers become more competent in addressing the performance problem of SMEs in a changing environment.

The model also highlights the chapter's contributions to the literature on performance in four areas, namely on how to fill the firm-level performance gap, how to develop management's competence, how HRM professionals can become more innovative and effective in addressing performance problems and how to become individually and collectively resilient in a new theoretical development referred to as 'Strategic Workforce Resilience Capability'. The implications of the chapter's findings and the model are considered, the conclusions and areas for future HRM studies are considered.

2. Performance management theory

Two seminal models on the issues impacting on organisational performance, as highlighted in the introduction, are examined and critiqued in greater detail in this section. They are High Performance Organisation (HPO) and High-Performance Work Systems (HPWS). Proponents of HPO such as and Holbeche [23] identified teamwork and planning in their efforts to help management gain greater control

of the performance problem [24]. However, the model does not specify what type of knowledge would be needed [12] or whether its implementation will help SMEs to minimise their performance risks [17] or the extent to which they are able to deal with their financial constraints [11]. Although the model adopts an anti-hierarchical approach and looks promising, it does not tell us whether the organisation of tasks into team-based activities will be beneficial to the way SMEs address their customer-related performance problems [13]. It is also far-fetched to intimate that team-working is the panacea to all organisations' performance problem given that some firms like SMEs do not have enough human resources to implement team activities as noted by Lin and Lin [19]. Likewise, the planning required takes time and this is an added drain on smaller firms that are already resource constrained. There is an additional difficulty here in the sense that solving a fundamental management competence and their ability to intervene as suggested by Reinhardt et al. [25] does not necessarily resolve a wider staff performance commitment issue [14]. This is partly because both staff groups could have different perspectives, preferences and objectives from management's team and network orientations proposed by HPO enthusiasts. Secondly, Katzenbach and Smith [26] highlighted value creation as part of the management planning process so as to make organisations more financially viable [11]. However, this proposition has not addressed the core human resource issues related to what staff regard as valuable, meaningful and sustainable organisational performance practices [21, 27]. In addition, creating reward systems for staff as suggested by may help in partially alleviating keeping staff financially satisfied but this measure has also prompted critique that it overlooks a wider and more crucial staff development and knowledge management issue [28, 29].

The disagreements within HPO scholars has amplified the performance problem and has led others to suggest that not knowing which of the HPO characteristics to use has even caused an organisational performance crisis [8]. This has also led to a wider organisational viability predicament [10, 21]. Within such a state of affairs, management and staff groups are left divided on which strategy to focus on [5] and which resolutions will be effective [30, 31] in the sustainable future [27].

The second seminal model on performance is High-Performance Work Systems. It identifies HRM practices such as appraisals as pivotal in boosting organisational and financial productivity [11]. Its earlier proponents such as Dyer [32] and Pfeffer [33] and recent additions by Messersmith et al. [34] uphold that performance management should be treated as a 'black box' and overall system problem. This means that both managers and staff should view performance as a coordinated set of system-wide organisational activities, whose implementation will help address an organisation to tackle the root causes of performance. Earlier scholars such as Vakola et al. [35] and Schuler and Jackson [36] and recent researchers such as Shin and Konrad [37] believe that there is causality between HPWS and organisational performance boost. HPWS scholars also propound a linkage between the internal application of performance enhancement measurements [20, 15, 16] and the external development of network and knowledge management relations [13, 19]. This involves the implementation of not only appropriate teamwork, planning, appraisal and reward structures but also tailoring the structures in such a way that they modify managerial and staff behaviours and an overall culture of performance [24]. Similar to HPO proponents, HPWS advocates such as Schuler and Jackson [36] and more recently, Murthy and Naidu [38] and Kaur et al. [39], also believe in using value-creation mechanisms to increase performance and minimise waste. Therefore proponents of both models believe that the adoption of flatter structures such as teamwork and incentivisation schemes could encourage staff commitment and buy-in and, as such, less resistance to the performance measures [40]. Yet, the extent of how effective the implementation of these measures are in dealing with

performance issue is yet to be finalised. Therefore, based on the examined HPO and HPWS models, there is a fundamental organisational performance gap problem, which has led Higgs and Dulewicz [8], Van de Ven and Jing [41] and recently Miller et al. [10] to refer the situation we are currently in as 'a crisis'. Other scholars have also opined the unsustainability of the management practices used [21, 27]. In order to see whether other literature could help resolve this research problem, the chapter examines Resilience Theory next.

3. Resilience theory

Resilience Theory expounds people's coping mechanisms to deal with adversity such as the performance crisis organisations are in [42]. Resilience enthusiasts refer to this capability as 'bouncing back' especially when the adversity had surfaced a certain level of incompetency [8, 43, 44]. Therefore, resilience research provides a lens to examine the potential benefits that the teamwork, planning and organisation aspects of HPO and HPWS had promised in their recommendations [30, 45]. To ascertain the extent to which resilience could contribute where the structural interventions recommended by HPO and HPWS had floundered, the chapter looks at value creation mechanisms such as team-working and management capability as advised by Katzenbach and Smith [26]. These scholars had proposed that in order to facilitate the required performance and behavioural modifications embedded in the performance models examined earlier, management need to resolve a much bigger problem, which is their interactions with staff. It is believed that doing so will enhance a deeper psychological capital among the interacting parties thereby triggering buy-in [46]. It is such management-staff interactive engagement which is critical for not only high performance [47] but also the development of resilience characteristics which are needed if both groups are to develop the teamwork, learning and entrepreneurial skills that Jones and Macpherson [48] and Jenkins et al. [49] think are crucial for longer term high performance. These qualities are similar to HPO's and HPWS's management competency development. The major and crucial difference is that they include a wider pool of staff (i.e. those lower down an organisation's hierarchy). The additional elements should therefore focus on how individuals and/or teams could develop not only decision-making capability [50] but also the capacity to become more innovative in doing so given resource constraints that most SMEs face and, therefore, given the need to be high performing [22, 44, 51]. In order to see whether developing an ultimate model, which would be beneficial for the respective parties and one that may be similar to Farkas et al.'s [52], the research methodology is examined next.

4. Methodology

4.1 Data collection

Between 2004/5 and 2011 the study conducted two sets of surveys on 4 SMEs in the UK. This was done as a result of the researcher being informed by the SMEs' management and staff that they were having major performance difficulties. The latter involved how to deal with customers' complaints on low quality goods, how to provide affordable housing in line with strict government specifications, how to provide healthier eating choices, how to provide affordable and supportive care to the elderly and decent alternative education for the youths. All of these

constraints increased the obviousness of the companies' underperformance and the urgency to research what was going on. To find out how staff and management addressed these performance problems, a longitudinal study that started in 2004 went on to 2011 because of the interesting data that was emerging from each firm. The data was collected using the interview method with middle and top management and staff. In total, 85 respondents were involved (see **Table 1** for a breakdown). Each interview set lasted for nearly 1 hour per respondent. In the first set, the opening questions were "What challenges has your organisation recently faced?" and "What did your department do to solve the challenges?" In the second set, the questions started with "How did you individually and collectively address the challenges?" and "Did the challenges have any effects on the way you performed your job?" and "What types of impacts on your performance are there?" Each respondent was free to elucidate their answers and talking more about what their experiences were and how they felt. These experiences and emotions were taken as staff's and management's perceptions of what they did to solve their respective performance problems in line with Peter et al. [1] (i.e. those related to regulations' compliance, goods and service improvement and good quality education provision for example). The fact that each of the 4 SMEs were dealing with similar staff and management performance issues necessitated their inclusion within the state timeframe in order to ascertain both their successes and continuous difficulties in line with Watson [53]. Respondents' age groups ranged from 18 to over 60 and they were all guaranteed anonymity and data reporting confidentiality.

The chapter's selected methodology is Interpretivism, which is defined as conversational agents' ability to interpret a set of meanings from their research contexts via a range of language forms. Adopting such a paradigm allows the researcher to also interpret (i.e. make sense of) participants' meaning making processes in a way that facilitates not only the development of new theory or model but also surfaces any potentially couched meanings in the collected data. This process is part of qualitative research, which features lived experiences, the emotions and perceptions of the conversational agents [54, 55]. Conducting the longitudinal study allowed for a continuous flow of conversations between the research and the respondents [56] and a wealth of experiences in terms of how to address the performance difficulties in the 4 firms. After considering 'third way' and other forms of narration, this chapter adopted the conversational agents' perspective to the meaning making of performance. This approach warranted the types of conversational questions asked during the data collection sets, the extended timeline and the nature of the conversations collected (**Table 2**).

SMEs	Roles	Respondent compositions
Lagat	Management Employees	10 employees, 7 management = 17 in 2004/05 2 employees, 2 management = 4 in 2011
Bakkavor-Laurens Patisserie	Management Employees	10 employees, 7 management = 17 in 2004/05 2 employees, 3 management = 5 in 2011
Eden Housing	Management Employees	10 employees, 7 management = 17 in 2004/05 2 employees, 2 management = 4 in 2011
Longhurst	Management Employees	10 employees, 7 management = 17 in 2004/05 2 employees, 2 management = 4 in 2011

Table 1.
Employee and management respondents in the 4 SMEs.

Aspects	HPO Model	HPWS Model	Practical solutions from SMEs
1	Create a performance environment	Develop an overall performance system	Staff's performance behaviours were implemented as part of an emerging performance culture
2	Develop team-working mentality	Align internal capacity with external demands to perform	Both staff and management saw the urgency to perform and started working on its implementation
3	Create space for individual and collective high performance	Identify managers who will be performance champions	Management started to streamline material resource allocation whilst staff saw the importance of working with colleagues
4	Encourage some flexibility	Build an interactive and open system of collaboration	
5	Be strategic in performance drive	Management development becomes key	Staff reorganised their traditional roles to meet the new performance demands
6	Develop human and material resources	Make effective use of available human and non-human resources	Staff began learning how to perform each other's jobs
7	Focus more on capability to boost performance	Staff training and development is facilitated for retention and performance purposes	Managers encouraged higher performance whilst staff implemented it
8	Monitor and evaluate the performance gains	Encourage staff voice and involvement in all performance processes	Repeat each of the previous stages in order to maintain sustainable and resilient high performers.

Table 2.
A comparison of HPO and HPWS models and the 4 SMEs practical solutions.

4.2 Data analysis

There were three stages of data analysis to try and exhaust respondents' experiences and perceptions of their performance as much as possible. Firstly, following Lincoln and Guba's [57] 'thick descriptions' (or conversations), the subjective meanings of how the respondents lived their performance experiences were presented in line with Roelvink and Zolkos [58]. Such representation was highlighted by pursuing a theme-based interpretation of the collected interview excerpts in the research tradition adhering to Alvesson and Skoldberg's [59] and Sarpong and Maclean [60]. Six key thematic patterns identified were surfaced, namely 1) new work structures; 2) new disciplinary mechanisms; 3) communication and competency gap; 4) role disruption leading to fragmented performance; 5) performing under duress and 6) the development of performance and resilience capability. Each of these findings is examined in greater detail in the next section in line with the chapter's model development objective. This is because such a development had been missing in previous scholarship and debates on performance.

5. Findings

The study's findings are presented in this section using the three-stage procedure identified previously. The first of these is the thematic presentation.

5.1 New organisational arrangements

At the start of the performance difficulty, it was clear from customers' complaints and apparent delays in meeting production targets especially in Bakkavor and Longhurst that management and staff realised that they were both dealing with a severe set of performance blockages. Whilst highlighting past incidents where Bakkavor staff had worked tirelessly to appease customer demands and Longhurst has had fruitful relationships with the various communities it provided accommodation to, each of the parties in each company started to identify a rift between the past and present situation not only in terms of performance but also the level and quality of partnership between each firm and their customer bases and the apparent lack of cordiality between management and staff's working relationship. Some of the discord was also echoed differently in other SME setting. For example, some people talked about 'There's got to be some structure...a set way' (Lagat staff)... 'jobs are designed directly according to delivery plans' (Bakkavor Manager). Whilst some staff pointed to the fact that 'Customers are a priority' (Bakkavor staff), it was also not unheard of for others to note that customer complaints were also become more frequent. On the other hand, as Longhurst management emphasised team-working in 'Work[ing] as a team, supporting each other and meeting deadlines' (Longhurst manager), a severe toll on staff welfare started to take place as longer hours of work were becoming commonplace. Despite this, elsewhere 'people hark[ed] back to good times' (Eden manager) as part of their consolation for their current predicament. In each of the four firms, the overall performance problem highlighted reactions of two main types, which included, firstly those in management positions initiated the redesigning of the old work structures, whose implementation they think will enhance staff's competences. However, not addressing the shortage of human resources cut short the anticipated benefits. Secondly, managers started to demand more of staff's contributions as they initiated additional 'hard' performance reporting mechanisms which were designed to control what staff did and by when. Longhurst management's 'decrease[ing] of salaries and increase[ing] [work] hours' (Longhurst manager) did not help an already difficult situation.

5.2 Counteracting disciplinary measures

Employees started to adapt to the new structures as they tried to circumvent them. By so doing they initiated some resilience. A Bakkavor manager said in 2011 'we will have to start taking disciplinary action on employees who don't want to change because they don't see the need; these are minimum wage jobs and we are being asked too much'. Such a threat led to staff carrying out their newly designed self-initiated tasks without management's knowledge. Interestingly, another manager at Eden highlighted the enormity of the performance related disciplinary issues by stating in 2004/05 'there is a lot of work on disciplinary issues, staff training and quality support...'. The issue of discipline at Longhurst was depicted differently as a manager stated in 2011 'you need to be very disciplined; it is important to have the plan and revisit it.' Being disciplined was also seen as something that management should exude initially. However, at Bakkavor, management began imposing strict disciplinary measures on staff as part of their punishment for not sticking with the newly designed work structures. Staff, on the other hand, saw such a move as insensitive to overall people 'welfare' (Bakkavor staff).

5.3 Communication falls apart

To emphasise the criticality of performance, staff recounted management's introduction of what, to them, was an employment tribunal, which was designed to

put additional pressure to evaluate their capability to perform the new roles and to check how their ‘...basic competences’ matched their jobs (Longhurst Manager). In their perception, this was introduced the wrong way as it did not promote the ‘communication of future plans’ (Bakkavor employee in 2005). Even a Bakkavor manager noted that ‘there’s a massive communication gap between the interaction of senior and lower management’ (Bakkavor manager in 2011). The apparent rush on management’s part to be increasingly authoritarian via the introduction of what seemed to staff as draconian mechanisms led to an atmosphere where staff started to feel disenchanting with the measures and disconnected from what was being communicated. Such urgent attempts to regain the performance that had been lost via communication breakdown highlighted additional cracks in alternative, more informal methods of communication processes that management started deploying. In the latter, new language started to be used as a way to reset management-staff relationships. The new communication channels highlighted the growing wedge between both parties that led to communication fragmentation, which hampered managers’ attempts to effectively implement the earlier structures meant to increase staff competences and performance. Bakkavor appeared to have suffered greatly from this maladaptation.

5.4 Redefining staff’s performance

The Training Officer at Lagat in 2011 stated that management began to feel that they were left out of what was going on. Interestingly, the imposition of jobs on staff opened up possibilities for staff to interpret how these were to be performed, often with limited resources available to them by their higher-ups. Such fragmentation in the communication of performance led staff to (re)define a new set of activities and the types of attitudes they would require to be resilient in carrying them out successfully. The ability to improvise new techniques, to be tenacious in keeping their roles intact and to stick with the need to perform created a management-driven ‘cultural divide’ between the two parties. This led to the springing up of smaller ‘groups’, which saw the need to create their own identity as well if they were to help their firms survive. Such an occurrence was most pronounced at Bakkavor and Eden where managers were ‘pulled into’ a new ‘them and us culture’ of performance. Staff devised their own roles, which were in line with what they could competently do but were at loggerheads with what management had originally designed within the new structures. Redesigning the already redesigned structures enabled staff to heighten their performance capability and to show what types of attitudes and behaviours management had failed to spot as crucial. The modifications highlighted the need for interacting parties within the performance relationship to respect each other’s dignity and competence as staff talked about ‘confiding’ to each other, other than those [i.e. work and performance structures] developed by managers, who no longer value ‘our opinion’ (Eden and Lagat staff).

5.5 Performing under duress

Despite such disagreements, management had developed a penchant to keep introducing new structures that they thought would highlight higher-order values of collaborative working, team-bonding exercises across departments in the hope that these would enhance greater efficiencies and thereby address their resource constraints. As counter measures, staff started conversations about the strictness of the mechanistic structures and discussed how they thought managers were treating them poorly. Staff started to each other outside of the structures and communication channels managers designed, which they felt were meant to ‘constantly’ monitor what they did via their supervisors and other team-leaders. To highlight

the seriousness of having to perform tasks under pressure, excerpts from Longhurst and Eden showed the urgency with which those with supervisory responsibilities felt they were obliged to meet the increasing nature of working to deadlines whilst adhering to performance and productivity targets. For example, whilst an Eden staff noted that 'the workload for them (managers) is colossal; managers don't know what a working week is like...but it's way beyond 35 hours; you see emails relating to work issues come at night and that's regular and very early in the morning, say at 6.30a.m.' and an Eden Manager stuck with the rhetoric of 'disciplinary procedures', a Longhurst manager identified 'to chart a new culture and new ways of working between....employees...in terms of how it works out, which way we want to go and how we want that way to be' whereas a Longhurst Manager noted how 'faced with the adversities, management appeared to rely increasingly on their power and 'disciplinary procedures...'

5.6 Showing resilient performance creativity

Staff began to adopt management qualities as they designed and implemented tasks without their managers' knowledge. Their independence highlighted their competence in performing the required roles under pressure. They showed creativity when they teamed up with emerging groups that showed a contributory penchant and 'supported each other through various measures such as 'dipping into other people's roles to support staff' whilst 'wanting to have responsibility on the way things are going' (Bakkavor manager) and 'networking', (Lagat staff). Their ability to show competence at a time of crucial performance pressures highlighted the apparent management incompetence that they had to surmount in the face of resource constraints. There became a clear 'shifting' of the 'cultural' and performance 'divide' between the two parties, from one group that saw structures as the answer to each of the organisations' performance difficulties to another that sought to identify the actions needed to help modify their behaviours and contribute through both formal and informal means. By attempting to address communication only through formalised channels cemented the hierarchy-driven structures which staff had realised to be crucial in fermenting the sub-groups that were antithetical to management's performance plans (e.g. the use of ICT and a barrage of e-mails to communicate performance standards). This only led to a 'new culture' where 'the CEO has only spoken once to the business' (Bakkavor manager) and an increase in 'turnover figures' (Lagat staff) and 'them-and-us' type of performance divide (Bakkavor staff).

6. Strategic workforce resilience management model

In the second stage of the presentation of the results, the previous section's themes are used to develop a Strategic Workforce Resilience Management Model. This is designed to help in answering this chapter's research question and be useful in addressing SMEs' human and financial resource performance difficulties. Two main aspects are worthy of note here. Firstly, the models' characteristics are embedded in a performance management process that is designed to deal with how people's behaviours could be modified such that SMEs' performance challenge is mitigated. This has not been attempted previously by proponents of HPO and HPWS [11, 13]. The model's four characteristics-set is expounded below to show what it could contribute to SMEs' performance.

The first aspect of the Strategic Workforce Resilience Management Model is rebuilding management-employee relations so as to repair the network relationship that Lin

and Lin [19] anticipated earlier. The 'them-and-us culture' and the need for management to 'push' staff highlighted a traditional management control approach [20], which damages employees' affective engagement with performance [14]. It was found that the ensuing blame culture only served to exacerbate the overall organisational performance challenge and its unsustainability [21]. As management were busy introducing additional work, they were also implementing communication and disciplinary structures in their attempts to minimise additional risks to performance [17]. However, such management practices did not promote knowledge generation and sharing capability as envisaged by Saunila [15] and Cerchione et al. [29]. Rather, employees started to turn to their sub-groups to develop more informal knowledge of how to resolve their knowledge development and innovation capability. It became advantageous when it was realised by both parties how performance depended on respecting each other's contributions at the micro-level if the macro-level performance problem is to be addressed. Likewise, it did not help when those in power tried to resolve matters from an HPO and HPWS's management interventionist perspective through structural imposition rather than providing collegial support to and adding to the resilience qualities of those whose performance may have been identified as wanting.

The second aspect of the Strategic Workforce Resilience Management Model highlights the need for both staff and management to agree on employment processes that clarify what each role category should be responsible to perform. Such clarification was lacking in each of the four SMEs, whose managers seemed to have adopted the HPO model. Despite the shortage of the requisite resources in line with Sardi et al. [11] and Shibin et al. [16], facilitating the implementation of teamwork, organisational planning and systems-wide change as recommended by HPO and HPWS enthusiasts became problematic. Staff's willingness to experiment with new ideas outside of the structural impositions and management control jeopardised the network relational aspect that Lin and Lin [19] consider crucial for organisational performance boost. Employees' shift towards greater clarification of and participation in each other's role boundaries also showed the need to go beyond mechanised communication practices and rigid workplace structures. The need to clarify expectations of what level of performance is needed for organisational performance viability as earlier anticipated by Thanki and Thakkar [27]. The urgency for both management and staff to agree on task redefinition and clarification helps in enabling the types of contributions that could foster Asamany and Shaorong [14] employee commitment to performance management measures.

The third aspect of the Strategic Workforce Resilience Management Model focuses on resetting an employment relationship which had been threatened by the performance crisis that the 4 SMEs found themselves in. This aspect of the model shows the central role that HRM professionals can play in revitalising performance and in mitigating against the financial and human resource risks [17]. Given that the four SMEs highlighted performance implementation measures based on the principle and belief of 'who is boss?' [24], such an approach stifles innovation capability [15, 61] and increases the wasteful use of already constrained resources [16]. Such additional damage to performance warrants an alternative to the HPO and HPWS models. The answer to this has been provided by employees who, in their desire to improve overall organisational performance started by establishing effective workplace relationships among colleagues at the micro-level in order to effect the critically important macro-level performance transformation that was missed by their management. They did so by diffusing their local knowledge and understanding of what works (or in other words, their ability to bounce back) in an effort to counter management's abuse of power and performance measurement controls through moribund team and workplace structural procedures with limited input from HR.

The fourth aspect of the Strategic Workforce Resilience Management Model highlights the need for HR professionals to go beyond the current focus on using organisational structures to review and repair damaged employment relationships as a result of a control, blame-based and ineffective organisational culture [20, 25]. Given the fact that management had underestimated the resilient capability of staff when they were trying to adapt their wider organisational performance to the volatility in their respective merger and post-merger acquisition situations, there is now an urgent need for HRM to include such an aspect in people management processes. It suffices to note that people's contributions are important but equally, if not more importantly, is the need to encourage and develop resilience building in all organisational members such that management and staff and their working relationships will become resilient to the performance challenge. Part of such resilience development involves an accommodation of innate personal preferences that people bring to work and performance settings. This can be done by both parties holding performance dialogues on how to tap into and make use of people's inner qualities to help HR to create a new workplace environment for higher performance individually and organisationally. This enables the development and sustenance of being able to 'bounce back' [30] such that performance is enhanced.

7. Strategic workforce resilience capability

In the third stage of results' presentation, previous studies' emphasis on one level of resilience development either at the macro or micro level [62, 63] or micro-level [42, 48] has not been particularly beneficial for resourced constrained SMEs. Such previous scholarship's focus had left SMEs' management torn between which one they should tailor their resources to achieve and how they could bring about the needed innovation and knowledge management capability [12, 15]. In avoiding the unhelpful dichotomy between HPO and HPWS scholarship, the Strategic Workforce Resilience Capability is being propositioned such that resilience development is seen not only as a useful characteristic for managers and employees to have but also for HR to design programmes that systematically encourage organisations, businesses and their members to see the benefit of being resilient in order to achieve higher levels of overall organisational performance.

8. Discussions

The proposed model has highlighted four crucial aspects/areas that have been neglected in High Performance Work, High-Performance Work Systems and Resilience Theory that would be beneficial to show how HRM can go beyond the application of structural mechanisms as recommended in HPO and HPWS. This will help to remedy damages in human performance, network and employment relationships [19]. The process identified from Aspect 1 to Aspect 4 features essential characteristics for such restoration. Whilst underscoring the need to improve traditional HPO and HPWS team related communication practices, this chapter highlights the importance of building resilience capability not just for the enhancement of management's competence but as also to facilitate greater HRM involvement in developing sustainable performance systems. The implications of such findings and the proposed model are discussed hereunder. On the theoretical level, whilst studies such as those of Shibin et al. [16] and de Araújo Lima et al. [17] have pointed to the significance of more effective use of human resources in order to mitigate against performance management risks, this chapter has identified how

to resolve the resource constraints associated with poor organisational It has done so by critiquing seminal works within the HPO and HPWS theoretical framework and offering not only practical solutions of how performance crises in 4 SMEs were solved but also a Resilience Model.

Theoretically referred to as 'Strategic Workforce Resilience Management Model', what has been added to HR theorisation is not only a model but also a process which shows the essential aspects that ought to be resolved when SMEs similar to the ones investigated here adopt the management-control type mechanisms in the implementation of HPO and HPWS's organisation of financial, knowledge and customer relations aspects [11, 13]. As highlighted in 'Strategic Workforce Resilience Capability', as the spin-off theory from the earlier developed model, both individual management and employee resilience characteristics, which have been critically neglected in HPO and HPWS theorising, are now recommended for inclusion in HR and performance management theorising. This is crucial to better understand the nuanced complexities of resilience within performance so as to help HR scholars realise not only their importance but also their usefulness in resolving overall organisational performance in a more strategic way. This chapter has therefore added strategic resilience onto HPO and HPWS's structures, as discussed. The model and theory highlight aspects that are vital for staff's high affective commitment as recommended by Asamany and Shaorong [14] but, more importantly, in ensuring the development of management competency. This will help to embed resilience in both parties.

On a practical level, the model can be used as a tool to help managers of small firms know which aspects of internal innovation capability [15] and external network relations development [19] are essential to foster the type of sustainability needed in the performance management of SMEs [21, 27]. de Araújo Lima et al. [17] risk management of performance, Shibin et al.'s [16] recommendation of the judicious use of human resources and the knowledge management aspects highlighted by Albassami et al.'s [28] and Petrov et al. [12] should be combined for the effective implementation of the innovation and organisational capability of the HPO and HPWS models. Within these are people's preferences, which management need to know and align to their overall organisation's performance objectives. Doing so facilitates not only an enhanced form of individual performance but also helps management and HRM incorporate these into their overall management capability plans. The additional element here is that HRM needs to go beyond simply developing staff competence through the usual training and development programmes, which echo the structural approach of HPO and HPWS, but to realise that achieving high performance also needs the development of people's resilience competence. This will help HRM to facilitate organisational and individual performance by tailoring their performance processes in line with both parties' requirements. One such area for doing so is HR's greater involvement in enabling bottom-up communication especially when cross-departmental working has become vital in tackling endemic, systemic performance difficulties. Such uptake will enhance staff involvement and engagement in performance issues and mitigate against resistance to resilience capability [22].

Methodologically, this chapter developed a model on how managers can not only adopt a strategic approach to managing performance but doing so in a way that also embeds employee resilience within a network of management and staff relations. It behoves of HRM professionals to recognise key human relational and developmental aspects of the model and to design new practices and processes for their implementation. The 'Strategic Workforce Resilience Management Model' is based on what both management and staff identified as crucial aspects that should be part of a performance management culture which also creates space for nurturing people's

resilience capacity especially in volatile merger and acquisition contexts. The model was not only based on employees' and management's statements but also on areas that the seminal works of High-Performance Organisation and High-Performance Work Systems had missed and the additions made through a critique of Resilience Theory. The systematic critical appreciation of performance management theory has led to the identification of not only adding to such theorisation but doing so in a way that helps HR professionals realise aspects that are needed to form an informed decision on how to achieve individual and overall organisational performance in a crisis context. Further evaluation of the model is provided elsewhere.

9. Conclusion and new directions for HRM

High Performance Organisation and High-Performance Work Systems proponents had earlier provided what they thought would serve as the magic wand for overall organisational performance by targeting structural mechanisms that they think could modify staff's behaviour. However, the role that HRM had to play in this, if any, had not been properly dealt with by such enthusiasts. The critical examination of both performance management theories helped to highlight additional key aspects of people that needed to have been considered. Likewise, the data from 4 SMEs in the UK surfaced four key areas, each of which had aspects of resilience, whose inclusion in managing performance enhanced the possibility of effectiveness and efficiency at both the individual managerial and staff level but also organisationally. Its four aspects were therefore included not only in the proposed model of 'Strategic Workforce Resilience Management' but also is 'Strategic Workforce Resilience Capability'. Both recognise the need for management to develop such a competence if they are to address the problem of competence [24]. However, the study's findings recognise the need to go a step further. This shift from previous studies' emphasis on management competence and control over the performance management of SMEs to overall workforce performance capability has contributed to Saunila's [15] idea of innovative capability and Shibin et al.'s [16] idea of better and more effective use of human resource capacity. Although a critical evaluation of performance management theory reveals the essence of using structures [11] to enhance employees' commitment [14] the extent to which resilience theory can contribute to organisational performance 'comeback' has not been previously attempted. In order to contribute to this deficit created by structural enthusiasts of HPO and HPWS, this chapter has used additional aspects from resilience theorisation [25] to develop a new model that shows how HRM professionals can add value to performance management in SMEs.

The chapter used both management's and staff's experiences of performing under pressurised environments to abstract how they fared. The predominant theme was found to centre on using a bottom-up approach as it produced greater effectiveness in implementing the team-work, competency development and commitment qualities that High Performance Organisation and High-Performance Work Systems' enthusiasts had recommended. The bottom up approach highlighted something additional though. This centred on the possibility for HR practitioners and scholars to include resilience competency development in their processes such that a new way of conducting HR can be realised. A practical way of doing so is included in the four aspects of the model proposed here to help fill the overall organisational performance implementation gap in a way that yields greater effectiveness and facilitates sustainability as recommended by Ali et al. [21] and Thanki and Thakkar [27]. Therefore, HRM studies and practice should go beyond treating individuals merely as usable resources to drive performance but as a network of

relational beings [19]. Instead, this chapter is proposing the need to enhance not only staff's but also management's resilience competence and developing appropriate people management and resilience programmes as the one highlighted in the four aspects of the model to achieve this in practice. Still in keeping with the need for HRM to go beyond its current position of a structural approach to performance, future work in this area could investigate how specific resilience behaviours in supervisors, higher level managers and staff could be developed as a bespoke strategic management of people. Additionally, the emerging literature and scholarship also seems to suggest that HRM scholars' treatment of individual aspects of performance-enhancement measures from knowledge management (Cerchione et al. [29] to effective resource utilisation [11, 16] may need to be complemented with other aspects such as resilience development in order to mitigate additional performance risks [17]. The work continues...

Author details

John Mendy

University of Lincoln, Lincoln International Business School, Lincoln, UK

*Address all correspondence to: jmendy@lincoln.ac.uk

IntechOpen

© 2021 The Author(s). Licensee IntechOpen. This chapter is distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/3.0>), which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited. 

References

- [1] Peter, F., Adegbuyi, O., Olokundun, M., Peter, A.O., Amahian, A.B.x, & Ibidunni, A.S. (2018). Government financial support and financial performance of SMEs, *Academy of Strategic Management Journal*, 17(2), 1-14.
- [2] Cappelli, P., & Conyon, M.J. (2018). What do performance appraisals do? *ILR Review*, 71(1), 88-116.
- [3] Kampkötter, P. (2017). Performance appraisals and job satisfaction. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 28(5), 750-774.
- [4] Pulakos, E.D., & O'Leary, R.S. (2011). Why is performance management broken? *Industrial and Organizational Psychology*, 4(2), 146-164.
- [5] Ogunyomi, P., & Bruning, N.S. (2016). Human resource management and organizational performance of small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in Nigeria. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 27(6), 612-634.
- [6] Dykes, B.J., Hughes-Morgan, M., & Kolev, K.D. et al. (2018). Organizational speed as a dynamic capability: Toward a holistic perspective. *Strategic Organization*.
- [7] Aguinis, H. (2019). *Performance Management for Dummies*. John Wiley & Sons.
- [8] Higgs, M. & Dulewicz, V. (2014). Antecedents of well-being: a study to examine the extent to which personality and emotional intelligence contribute to well-being. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 25(5), 718-735.
- [9] Alacovska, A. (2018). Informal creative labour practices: A relational work perspective. *Human Relations*.
- [10] Miller, K.D., Gomes, E., & Lehman, D.W. (2018). Strategy restoration. *Long Range Planning*.
- [11] Sardi, A., Sorano, E., Garengo, P., & Ferraris, A. (2020). The role of HRM in the innovation of performance measurement and management systems: a multiple case study in SMEs. *Employee Relations: The International Journal*.
- [12] Petrov, V., Ćelić, Đ., Uzelac, Z., & Drašković, Z. (2020). Three pillars of knowledge management in SMEs: evidence from Serbia. *International Entrepreneurship and Management Journal*, 16(2), 417-438.
- [13] Castagna, F., Centobelli, P., Cerchione, R., Esposito, E., Oropallo, E., & Passaro, R. (2020). Customer Knowledge Management in SMEs Facing Digital Transformation. *Sustainability*, 12(9), 3899.
- [14] Asamany, A., & Shaorong, S. (2018). The Ripple Effects of Performance Management on Employees? Perceptions and Affective Commitment among Small and Medium Scale Enterprises (SMEs). *International Journal of Business Administration*, 9(1), 55-63.
- [15] Saunila, M. (2016). Performance measurement approach for innovation capability in SMEs. *International Journal of Productivity and Performance Management*.
- [16] Shubin, K.T., Dubey, R., Gunasekaran, A., Hazen, B., Roubaud, D., Gupta, S., & Foropon, C. (2020). Examining sustainable supply chain management of SMEs using resource-based view and institutional theory. *Annals of Operations Research*, 290(1), 301-326.
- [17] de Araújo Lima, P.F., Crema, M., & Verbano, C. (2020). Risk management in SMEs: A systematic literature review

and future directions. *European Management Journal*, 38(1), 78-94.

[18] Diederich, S., Brendel, A.B., & Kolbe, L.M. (2019). Towards a taxonomy of platforms for conversational agent design.

[19] Lin, F.J., & Lin, Y.H. (2016). The effect of network relationship on the performance of SMEs. *Journal of Business Research*, 69(5), 1780-1784.

[20] Jardioui, M., Garengo, P., & El Alami, S. (2019). How organizational culture influences performance measurement systems in SMEs. *International Journal of Productivity and Performance Management*.

[21] Ali, Y., Younus, A., Khan, A.U., and Pervez, H. (2020). Impact of Lean, Six Sigma and environmental sustainability on the performance of SMEs. *International Journal of Productivity and Performance Management*.

[22] Mendy, J. & Rahman, M. (2018). Application of HRM's Universal Model: an examination of People vs Institutions as Barriers of Internationalization for SMEs in a Small Developing Country. *Thunderbird International Business Review*, 61(2), 363-374.

[23] Holbeche, L. (2005). *The High-Performance Organization: Creating Dynamic Stability and Sustainable Success*. Routledge.

[24] Pešalj, B., Pavlov, A., & Micheli, P. (2018). The use of management control and performance measurement systems in SMEs. *International Journal of Operations & Production Management*.

[25] Reinhardt, R., Gurtner, S., & Griffin, A. (2018). Towards an adaptive framework of low-end innovation capability—A systematic review and multiple case study analysis. *Long Range Planning*, 51(5), 770-796.

[26] Katzenbach, J.R., & Smith, D.K. (2015). *The wisdom of teams: Creating the high-performance organization*. Harvard Business Review Press.

[27] Thanki, S., & Thakkar, J.J. (2019). An investigation on lean-green performance of Indian manufacturing SMEs. *International Journal of Productivity and Performance Management*.

[28] Albassami, A.M., Hameed, W.U., Naveed, R.T., and Moshfegyan, M. (2019). Does knowledge management expedite SMEs performance through organizational innovation? An empirical evidence from small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). *Pacific Business Review International*, 12(1), 11-22.

[29] Cerchione, R., Esposito, E., & Spadaro, M.R. (2016). A literature review on knowledge management in SMEs. *Knowledge Management Research & Practice*, 14(2), 169-177.

[30] Mendy, J. (2020). 'Bouncing back' from Workplace Stress: From HRD's Individual Employee's Developmental Focus to Multi-faceted 'Collective Workforce Resilience Intervention', *Advances in Developing Human Resources*, 22(4). Mendy, J. (2019), Supporting Creating Shared Value: Including Local and Global Clusters of Staff Resistance to Strategic SME Restructuring. *Strategic Change*, 28(2), 157-161.

[31] Rahman, M. & Mendy, J. (2018). Evaluating People-related Resilience and Non-Resilience Barriers of SMEs' Internationalisation: A developing country perspective. *International Journal of Organisational Analysis*, 27(2), 225-240.

[32] Dyer, L. (1993). *Human resources as a source of competitive advantage*. Kingston, Ont: Queen's University, Industrial Relations Centre Press.

[33] Pfeffer, J. (1994). *Competitive advantage through people*. Boston: Harvard Business School Press.

- [34] Messersmith, J.G., Patel, P.C., Lepak, D.P., & Gould-Williams, J.S. (2011). Unlocking the black box: Exploring the link between high-performance work systems and performance. *Journal of applied psychology*, 96(6), 1105.
- [35] Vakola, M., Tsaousis, I., & Nikolaou, I. (2004). The role of emotional intelligence and personality variables on attitudes toward organisational change. *Journal of Managerial Psychology*, 19(2), 88-110.
- [36] Schuler, R., & Jackson, S.E. (2014). Human resource management and organizational effectiveness: yesterday and today. *Journal of Organizational Effectiveness: People and Performance*.
- [37] Shin, D., & Konrad, A.M. (2017). Causality between high-performance work systems and organizational performance. *Journal of management*, 43(4), 973-997.
- [38] Murthy, P.S., & Naidu, M.M. (2012). Sustainable management of coffee industry by-products and value addition—A review. *Resources, Conservation and recycling*, 66, 45-58.
- [39] Kaur, G., Wong, J.W., Kumar, R., Patria, R.D., Bhardwaj, A., Uisan, K., & Johnravindar, D. (2020). Value addition of anaerobic digestate from biowaste: thinking beyond agriculture. *Current Sustainable/Renewable Energy Reports*, 7(2), 48-55.
- [40] Bonavia, T., & Marin-Garcia, J.A. (2011). Integrating human resource management into lean production and their impact on organizational performance. *International Journal of Manpower*.
- [41] Van de Ven, A.H., & Jing, R. (2012). Indigenous management research in China from an engaged scholarship perspective. *Management and Organization Review*, 8(1), 123-137.
- [42] Conway, E. & Monks, K. (2011). Change from Below: The Role of Middle Managers in Mediating Paradoxical Change. *Human Resource Management Journal*, 21, 190-203.
- [43] Huy, Q.N., Corley, K.G., & Kraatz, M.S. (2014). From support to mutiny: Shifting legitimacy judgments and emotional reactions impacting the implementation of radical change. *Academy of Management Journal*, 57(6), 1650-1680.
- [44] Gunasekaran, A., Rai, B.K., & Griffin, M. (2011). Resilience and competitiveness of small and medium size enterprises: an empirical research. *International Journal of Production Research*, 49(18), 5489-5509.
- [45] Ates, A. & Bititci, U. (2011). Change process: a key enabler for building resilient SMEs. *International Journal of Production Research*, 49(18), 5601-5618.
- [46] Cooper, C., Flint-Taylor, J. & Pearn, M. (2013). Building resilience for success: a resource for managers and organizations. UK: Palgrave Macmillan.
- [47] Gupta, V. & Singh, S. (2014). Psychological capital as a mediator of the relationship between leadership and creative performance behaviors: Empirical evidence from the Indian R&D sector. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 25(10), 1373-1394.
- [48] Jones, O., & Macpherson, A. (2006). Inter-organizational learning and strategic renewal in SMEs: Extending the 4I framework. *Long Range Planning*, 39(2), 155-175.
- [49] Jenkins, A.S., Wiklund, J., & Brundin, E. (2014). Individual Responses to Firm Failure: Appraisals, Grief and the Influence of Prior Failure Experience. *Journal of Business Venturing*, 29: 1-33.

- [50] Hudson, B.A., Okhuysen, G.A. & Creed, W.D. (2015). Power and institutions: Stones in the road and some yellow bricks. *Journal of Management Inquiry*, 24(3), 233-238.
- [51] Yang, W., & Meyer, K.E. (2015). Competitive dynamics in an emerging economy: Competitive pressures, resources, and the speed of action. *Journal of Business Research*, 68(6), 1176-1185
- [52] Farkas, T., Mendy, J., & Kargas, N. (2020). 'Enhancing resilience in autistic adults using community-based participatory research: A novel HRD-intervention in employment service provision', *Advances in Developing Human Resources*, 22(4).
- [53] Watson, J. (2020). Exposing/correcting SME underperformance myths. *International Journal of Gender and Entrepreneurship*, 12(1), 77-88.
- [54] Aliyu, A.A., Bello, M.U., Kasim, R., & Martin, D. (2014a). Positivist and non-positivist paradigm in social science research: Conflicting paradigms or perfect partners. *J. Mgmt. & Sustainability*, 4, 79.
- [55] Aliyu, A.A., Bello, M.U., Kasim, R. and Martin, D. (2014b). Positivist and non-positivist paradigm in social science research: Conflicting paradigms or perfect partners. *Journal of Management and Sustainability*, 4, 79.
- [56] Filser, M., Tiberius, V., Kraus, S., Zeitlhofer, T., Kailer, N. & Müller, A. (2020). Opportunity recognition: Conversational foundations and pathways ahead. *Entrepreneurship Research Journal*, 1.
- [57] Lincoln, Y. S. & Guba, E. G. (1985). *Naturalistic Inquiry*. CA: Sage, Beverly Hills.
- [58] Roelvink, G., & Zolkos, M. (2015). Affective ontologies: Post-humanist perspectives on the self, feeling and inter-subjectivity. *Emotion, Space and Society*, 14: 47-49.
- [59] Alvesson, M. & Skoldberg, K. (2017). *Reflexive methodology: New vistas for qualitative research*. London: Sage.
- [60] Sarpong, D. & Maclean, M. (2017). Service nepotism in cosmopolitan transient social spaces. *Work, Employment and Society*, 31(5), 764-781
- [61] Seligman, M. E. (2011). Building resilience. *Harvard Business Review*, 89(4), 100-106.
- [62] Jarzabkowski, P., Bednarek, R. & Chalkias, K. et al. (2018). Exploring inter-organizational paradoxes: Methodological lessons from a study of a grand challenge. *Strategic Organization*.
- [63] Mafabi, S., Munene, S.M., & Ahiauzu, A. (2015). Creative climate and organisational resilience: the mediating role of innovation. *International Journal of Organizational Analysis*, 23(4), 564-587.